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**OUR NEW MISSION:** help people and communities achieve better health.

E-newsletter 15 | January-February, 2014

## The Florida Blue Foundation is Making Some Important Changes

I am pleased to let you know that The Florida Blue Foundation Board recently approved the Foundation's Strategy Refresh that will take effect in 2014. Most foundations routinely conduct self-assessments of their programs and processes to ensure they remain relevant, aligning with the needs of the community. In the case of the Florida Blue Foundation we also look at how our programs align with our Company's market priorities, the changing landscape of the health care system and the health needs of the communities across Florida.



The Foundation reviewed and revised our strategic grantmaking program objectives around these three objectives:

1. Leverage a strong connection between the Company and the Foundation's mission and programming to enhance brand strength and reputation management.
2. Target the Foundation's focus areas for grants and programs to reflect changes in the business and health environment and community needs.
3. Position the Foundation as a thought leader, convener and honest broker on current and future health trends.

For this eNewsletter, I want to focus on Objective #2 which deals with the changes in our grantmaking Focus Areas. The Foundation will focus on health solutions within the delivery system and multicultural/growing populations. Critical issues of affordability, access and quality remain largely unaddressed and resolution will depend on the ability to improve the health of people and communities. We plan to do this by funding programs and organizations that will:

1. Advance innovation/promote solutions in the health care system



Competitive grants that focus on innovative ideas and programs that propose best practice models for new health solutions serving underserved populations

- Focus on access to affordable, nontraditional health service delivery
- 2. Build healthy, strong communities
  - Local grants to meet local community needs, improve health and well-being
  - Areas of focus: Education/Literacy, especially birth through 5; Health & Human Services; Arts & Culture and Community Development.
- 3. Improve consumer health with focus on healthy lifestyles to promote better health in communities
  - Develop competitive grant programs for family wellness in multicultural populations
  - Use already developed sound evidence-based materials where appropriate.
- 4. Improve quality and safety of patient care
  - Continue to co-lead Florida Action Coalition
  - Develop health professional programs with focus on workforce shortages and expertise to serve special populations (seniors, disabled, etc.)
  - Explore opportunity for grants to caregiver education and support for "aging in place" programs

We are strengthening the metrics and evaluations in all of the grants funded by the Foundation. It is imperative that we build into all of our grants measures that will enable the Foundation to report quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the financial and social investments we make in our communities.

### Upcoming Events

#### 2014 Sapphire Awards and Symposium

April 23-24, 2014  
The Renaissance  
World Golf Village  
Resort  
500 S. Legacy Trail  
St. Augustine, FL  
32092

#### Florida Blue Foundation Staff

Monica Boyajian,  
Foundation Analyst

Rene Bridges,

### Important Program Announcements

Please note that as part of the Foundation's Strategy Refresh, some of our online applications will take on a new appearance. For example, the IMPACT Grant applications will be designed very differently in the future.

Also, the Quality of Life grant program is changing its name and focus to the **Build Healthy, Strong Communities** grant program. The application for that program will be changing as well.

Please note that the online application site will be **temporarily closed February 12 - 26** in order to ensure a smooth transition and make necessary modifications to the applications in our database. The updated applications will be available beginning February 27. The applications are for grants up to \$50,000 and are available through [www.floridablue.com](http://www.floridablue.com) or [www.bluefoundationfl.com](http://www.bluefoundationfl.com).



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Cindy Nixon-Witt,  
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- IMPACT Program

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Vice President

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Senior Program Manager



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## Call For Nominations

### 3rd Annual Florida Blue Volunteers Of The Year Award

Do you know a Florida Blue employee who is making a positive impact in your community? An employee who goes the extra mile in volunteer work with your nonprofit organization? Nominate that person for a **Florida Blue Volunteers of the Year Award** and your organization could be eligible for a gift of up to \$2,500!

Now in its third year, the Florida Blue Volunteers of the Year Award is a company-wide employee volunteer recognition program that recognizes employees who go the extra mile in service to the underserved in Florida's communities.

The nomination period for this year's Florida Blue Volunteers of the Year Award opens Monday, February 17. The deadline for nominations is midnight on Friday, February 28. Nomination forms can be found by going to the Toolbox on the home page of the [Florida Blue website](#) and clicking on the *Blue in the Community* link and then *Community Service*.

Questions? Email us at [FloridaBlueVolunteers@bcbsfl.com](mailto:FloridaBlueVolunteers@bcbsfl.com).

## Save The Date – Sapphire Registration Is Open

### 2014 Sapphire Awards and Symposium

April 23-24, 2014

Renaissance World Golf Village Resort

St. Augustine, Florida

For more information please check our website, [www.bluefoundationfl.com](http://www.bluefoundationfl.com) or call 800-477-3736, ext. 63215

Exhibitors welcome and must register on or before March 14, 2014.

- Exhibitor's fee: \$150.00
- Nonprofit exhibitors are given discounted fees.

***Space is filling up so don't miss out on this exciting event!***

## Important Staff Announcements



Effective, January 1, 2014, Sharon Hackney has a new position with the Florida Blue Foundation. She will report to Velma Monteiro-Tribble as the Senior Program Officer for the Nursing and current IMPACT grant programs.

Kerri Masley joined the Foundation team on February 17, 2014, and is handling Sharon's former role. She will serve as the Senior Program Officer for the new Focus Area, **Building Healthy, Strong Communities** (formerly **Quality of Life**). Kerri reports to Susan Towler. She brings to the Foundation more than 13 years of experience in health care. She has also held various consultant positions in Florida Blue.



Monica Boyajian joined the Foundation team on February 10, 2014. She will serve as Foundation Analyst. Barbara Riggan served in this role until her retirement in December 2013. Monica's prior experience spans insurance, banking, customer service, and most recently supporting the Florida Blue Business Ethics, Integrity and Compliance team with emphasis on the Government and Commercial compliance monitoring activities and audits.

Florida Blue's Darnell Smith has a new role as Market President for North Florida. He will work closely with the Foundation to collaborate on charitable giving to the communities he is serving. Darnell is no stranger to this part of Florida and is a long-time executive with Florida Blue. He will work closely with the Corporate Social Responsibility team to build community investment strategies for Florida Blue.



Please join me in welcoming all of these new people and the changes to the Florida Blue Foundation. I hope at some point you will get to know and work with each of them.



Should you have any questions about any of these changes or updates, please let us hear from you by sending your email to [thebluefoundation@bcbsfl.com](mailto:thebluefoundation@bcbsfl.com)

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OUR NEW MISSION: help people and communities achieve better health.

E-newsletter 16 | March-April, 2014

 **SPECIAL ISSUE** | Florida Blue Foundation's 2014 Statewide Sapphire Awards and Symposium

## "Recognizing excellence and innovation in community health"

This is the ninth year for the Florida Blue Foundation's sponsored statewide Sapphire Awards and Symposium. This year the event will take place at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort Convention Center in St. Augustine, Florida, from April 23-24, 2014.

The purpose of the Sapphire Awards and Symposium embodies The Foundation's desire to recognize and award excellence and innovation among not-for-profit organizations, programs and individuals that have made a significant, positive impact on health-related outcomes for Florida's at-risk people and communities.

The Sapphire Awards is a highly competitive nomination program. This year, for the first time in the life of the program, we received 100 applications from around the state of Florida. They were reviewed and selected by a prestigious, external panel of experts in the field of health and health care related fields. For 2014, three nominees were chosen as finalists in the Individual category; one was chosen as the finalist in the Program category; and two were chosen as finalists in the Organization category. Here is a brief summary on each of the finalists by category:



**SAPPHIRE**  
AWARDS

### Upcoming Events

**2014 Sapphire Awards and Symposium**  
April 23-24, 2014

### Individual Category Finalists:

**Dr. Paul R. Ahr, Ph.D., M.P.A.,**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer, Camillus House, Miami-Dade*



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St. Augustine, FL  
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Vice President

Susan Wildes,  
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Paul R. Ahr is a psychologist with more than 40 years of experience in the mental health and substance abuse rehabilitative fields and a nationally recognized consultant to not-for-profits and corporate management. Ahr has distinguished himself throughout his career as a trail blazer, visionary and advocate for persons suffering with mental illness.



Since 2004, Ahr has served as president and chief executive officer of Camillus House, a nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian services to persons who are poor and/or homeless, providing housing to 1,000 persons per night. Throughout his tenure, he has consistently called for greater responsibility and support of this important issue within the local business community as well as to civic and neighborhood groups, paving the way for greater cooperation and understanding of the issues that affect the homeless population in Miami.

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**Estrellita "Lo" Berry, M.A.,  
*President and Chief Executive Officer, REACHUP, Inc.,  
Tampa***

Berry is the founder of REACHUP, Inc., one of the most successful maternal and infant health initiatives in the nation serving low-income minority communities. A highly respected national leader in eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in maternal and infant health, Berry is known for her innovative strategies that have proven impact on reducing low preterm birth weight and infant mortality.



Berry also plays a lead role in increasing awareness of the persistent racial disparities in health outcomes and health care and the importance of engaging the community in creative research to find solutions. She demonstrates how, with minimal resources, different communities can solve common health problems by sharing information and resources, and learning from each other's challenges, successes, and failures.

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**Susan Widmayer, PH.D.,  
*Founder and Former Executive Director, Children's  
Diagnostic & Treatment Center, Fort Lauderdale***

Susan Widmayer, a licensed psychologist, is distinguished by her lifelong dedication,





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determination and passion for helping the most vulnerable children and their families.



Widmayer founded the Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center (CDTC) in 1983 as a state-sponsored follow-up clinic for infants discharged from the seven neonatal intensive care units in Broward County. Under Widmayer's leadership, CDTC has grown from a staff of five located in a storage closet into seven different programs located in a 40,000-square-foot, kid-friendly center with a multidisciplinary, multilingual staff of 188. They serve annually more than 11,000 Broward County children with disabilities, developmental delays, and chronic and terminal illnesses and their families, many of whom live in impoverished conditions. Since its inception, more than 200,000 children have been served.

## Program Category Finalist



### **Green Family Foundation Neighborhood HELP (Health Education Learning Program) at Florida International University – Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Miami-Dade**

Green Family Foundation Neighborhood HELP™ (Health Education Learning Program) is the centerpiece of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine's curriculum at Florida International University, the first new medical college curriculum in more than 50 years and the only program of its kind in the nation. The interdisciplinary curriculum integrates classroom and clinical training across disciplines with hands-on care in underserved communities. The program provides interprofessional teams of medical, nursing, social work, and law students with community-based educational and service-learning experiences for the practical application of ethical, social, behavioral and clinical competencies to enable students to experience community-oriented primary care and place-based medicine. Supervised by faculty physicians, students assess, respond to and monitor the health of



families. Household referrals come from community-based organizations (schools, churches, child care services, etc.).

## Organization Category Finalists



### Big Bend Cares

Big Bend Cares was founded in 1985 as an all-volunteer organization in direct response to the AIDS epidemic across the United States. Today, the agency provides education and comprehensive support to well over 22,000 individuals infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Big Bend Cares serves an eight-county area and provides services in two areas: HIV prevention for the community at large, and HIV care for those infected with HIV. It offers holistic care and free HIV testing and education at no cost to its clients. Its "no wrong door" policy ensures all clients receive assistance, even if the requested service is outside the scope of what the agency provides. Big Bend Cares strives to live by the motto: "AIDS doesn't care who you are. We do."



### Chapman Partnership

Chapman Partnership (formerly Community Partnership for the Homeless) is a Miami-Dade County provider of emergency housing for the homeless, operating two Homeless Assistance Centers with 800 beds in Miami and Homestead. The organization provides a comprehensive support program that includes emergency housing; meals; health, dental and psychiatric care; day care; job training and placement; and assistance with securing stable housing. Since 1995, Chapman Partnership reports nearly 96,000 admissions, including 19,000 children, and a 63 percent

success rate of moving people from homelessness to self-sufficiency. As a private sector partner of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, Chapman Partnership is recognized as a national model for its comprehensive approach to helping the homeless.

Each of the finalists has worked with the Foundation to create wonderful videos to tell their stories at the Sapphire Awards Luncheon. The stories and the work of all of the finalists are powerful and show great commitments to making life better for the underrepresented and underserved Floridians.

## A few of the highlighted speakers/presenters this year are:



**Dr. Mark Smith, Recently retired president and CEO of the California Health Care Foundation.**

Dr. Smith will speak on the topic of *Foundations and Health Care Reform: What is the "Right" Role?*



**Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

Dr. Wakefield will speak about *Rural Health Care in Florida*.



**Dr. Thaddeus Seymour, Senior Vice President, Lake Nona**



**Dr. Ginny Ehrlich, Chief Executive Officer, Clinton Foundation**

**Lynn Banaszak Brusco, Executive Director of the Disruptive Health Technology Institute at Carnegie**





**Mellon University**

Will all be a part of a panel discussion about *Emerging Trends — Innovations in Health Care Delivery Systems*.

## Great Workshops and Panel Discussions, on Topics Like:

*Nonprofit Challenges Solved through Social Media, Lobbying vs. Advocacy, Improving Population Health: The Affordable Care Act and Future Innovative Approaches, Strengthening the Health Care Safety Net for Floridians in Rural Areas, Emerging Trends – Innovations in Health Care Delivery Systems, Addressing Program Performance through Metrics and Evaluations, Strategies and Benefits of Strategic Planning, and many more...*

If you have not registered, [click here to register today](#) before it is too late. **A limited number of registration scholarships** are available based on need. To inquire about scholarships or for other questions please feel free to send us an email at [thebluefoundation@bcbsfl.com](mailto:thebluefoundation@bcbsfl.com).

Come and see the many other surprises we have in store for each participant. The Board and the staff look forward to greeting all of you at the Florida Blue Foundation's 2014 Sapphire Awards and Symposium.



**Susan Towler**  
Vice President,  
Florida Blue Foundation

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*From left to right: Pat Geraghty and Susan Towler welcome members of the 2014 Sapphire Awards Review Team and Selection Committee: Henrie Treadwell, Paul Duncan, Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew, Curtis Holloman, Alina Perez-Stable, and Penny Ralston.*

The 2014 Sapphire Awards and Symposium, held on April 23-24 in St. Augustine, Florida, at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort Convention Center, was a great success and we thank all of you who attended this year. We had a total of 340 participants from Florida in attendance and based on the post-survey responses from 130 of those in attendance, they felt very satisfied with the accommodations, the different professional development sessions, speakers and plenary sessions.

By the end of June we will have the plenary session presentations posted on our website so you can review them. If you could not attend and would like to hear some of the presentations, we are making them available on our website. We will notify you when they are posted and will also provide you with the links that will take you directly to the presentation of your choice.

Below are some snapshots from the Sapphire Awards and Symposium.

We are already making plans for the 2015 Sapphire Awards and Symposium — watch future e-newsletters for details.

Again, on behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff of the Florida Blue Foundation, we thank you for your continued support.





## SPECIAL NOTICE

We will notify you later in June of the posting and deadline date for the 2015 online Sapphire Award Nomination Applications so you can submit your nomination applications for the 2015 Sapphire Awards. Start thinking now about who are those outstanding individuals, programs, or nonprofit organizations in your communities that you would like to nominate because of their distinguished work that is evidenced by their leadership, innovation and achievements in community health.

### Florida Blue Foundation Staff

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Foundation Analyst

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Development  
- South Florida

Cathryn DeCecco,  
Market Affairs Specialist  
- Central Florida

Karla Ebio,  
Sponsorship & Events  
Specialist

Jay Farley,  
Executive Assistant

## Honorees:

Estrellita "Lo" Berry receives Honorable Mention award and twenty-five thousand dollars for REACHUP, Incorporated, in the Individual Category from Pat Geraghty.



Susan Widmayer receives Honorable Mention award and twenty-five thousand dollars for Children's Diagnostic and Treatment Center in the Individual Category from Pat Geraghty.

Pat Geraghty presents Sapphire Award trophy and one hundred thousand dollars for Camillus House to Paul Ahr, Winner, Individual Category, 2014 Sapphire Award.



Pat Geraghty presents 2014 Sapphire Award trophy and sixty thousand dollars to Joe Greer, Florida International University Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP™, Winner of the Program Category.

Pat Geraghty presents 2014 Sapphire Award trophy and one hundred thousand dollars to Louis Dilbert, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Big Bend Cares, Winner, Organization Category.

Sharon Hackney,  
Senior Program Manager

Michelle Hamilton,  
Market Affairs Specialist  
- West Florida

Sarah Hande,  
Employee Program  
Manager

Kristen Mareello,  
Director - Finance and  
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Velma Monteiro-Tribble,  
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Susan Towler,  
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Pat Geraghty presents 2014 Sapphire Award trophy and one hundred thousand dollars to H. Daniel Vincent, President and CEO, Chapman Partnership, Winner, Organization Category.

## Presenters:



Mark Smith, MD, MBA, retired founding President and CEO, California HealthCare Foundation, opens the Sapphire Awards and Symposium with the topic: *Foundations and Health Care Reform: What is the "Right" Role?*





Keynote Speaker Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Jason Altmire, Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Community Engagement, Florida Blue, chat before her presentation on *Rural Healthcare in Florida*.



The panel discussion on *Improving Population Health: The Affordable Care Act and Future Innovative Approaches* included Kirk Fischer, James Corbett, Dawn Emerick, Carl Patten and Roderick King.



Darnell Smith, Jannifer Harper, Arch Mainous and Daniel Van Durme addressed *Strengthening the Health Care Safety Net for Floridians Living in Rural Areas*.



Breakout sessions included strategic planning, metrics and evaluation, social media, lobbying and advocacy, writing proposals, and conversations with past Sapphire Awards honorees.

**Attendees:**



Began each day with low-key, easy wellness stretches



Participated in lively discussions, networked and heard from national, regional, state and local health experts



**Exhibitors:**





SPARK, a research-based, public health organization that disseminates evidence-based physical education to teachers and recreation leaders serving Pre-K through 12th grade students, was among 20-plus exhibitors.



Precise Portions Nutrition Control System offers portion control solutions that encourage healthy eating for individuals, families and children.



St. Vincent's HealthCare Mobile Health Ministry unit offered tours and opportunities to learn more about the mobile health services provided to the inner city, rural, agricultural and metropolitan regions within five northeast Florida counties.

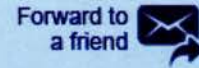
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MISSION: Help people and communities achieve better health.

E-newsletter 18 - Part I | July-August 2014



In 2007 the Florida Blue Foundation launched a seven-year community engagement initiative called *Embrace a Healthy Florida*. It is still going strong today in six targeted communities led by six established organizations and engaged community coalitions in: Hialeah - the City of Hialeah; Jacksonville - Florida Department of Health in Duval County; Opa-locka - War on Poverty-Florida; Orlando/Parramore - Health Council of East Central Florida; Tallahassee - Florida A & M University and Community Partners; and Tampa/Sulphur Springs - Tampa Metropolitan YMCA. The purpose of this community engagement initiative is to address the causes of childhood obesity across the state and to prevent Florida's childhood obesity epidemic. It is about making changes that make a difference, like seeking ways to remove the very real barriers that stand between children's health, healthy food choices and physical activity.

*Embrace a Healthy Florida* was designed around seven strategies to evaluate the success of the Initiative in each community. Those success factors are: **1) targeted interventions with at-risk communities and low-income children, 2) increased access to healthy foods, 3) promote changes in parenting and families, 4) promote changes in child care or school settings, 5) promote changes in the environment, 6) address marketing and advertising practices, and 7) address health care providers and systems.** The Foundation has an external evaluator that is monitoring the Initiative's outcomes and metrics.



While there is still one year to go before the Initiative ends, there are reported successes/changes made against the seven success factors. The communities are leveraging the Foundation's dollars and the Foundation is now working with the communities on a "legacy" plan for each of the communities to ensure that the results in these communities as it relates to childhood obesity and the built environment live on well past the seven years of Foundation funding. This newsletter shares just some of our outcomes and we are proud of the communities for their successes. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the enewsletter.

Susan Towler,  
*Vice President, Florida Blue Foundation*

## Some of the *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Outcomes and Impacts

- All six communities targeted represent at-risk communities with larger populations of low-income children. These six communities have served 187,827 youth and 76,112 adults (total 262,939).
- Documented evidence of increased access to healthy food in areas designated as "food deserts" through renovations to corner grocery stores, creation of farmers markets, and development of 173 community and school gardens where there were none before. A total of 12,363 youth and adults participated in gardening activities between January and December 2013.
- Developed and implemented culturally appropriate nutrition education programs focused on healthy meals design, purchase and preparation to 64,995 youth and adults in all six communities. Families reported healthier eating, improved health (reduced BMI, HA1C, cholesterol and weight), and increased physical activity as families and individually.
- Community coalitions were successful in removing sugary beverages from all elementary schools and most child care centers in targeted areas.
- Nutrition and physical activity training provided to 57,000 workers, children and families at nearly 200 child care centers and after school program providers that resulted in changes to policies and practices to incorporate these healthy behaviors into the schools and centers.
- Worked with elected officials to advocate and gain support for the implementation of marked crosswalks on streets where children must cross busy roads to walk to and from school in three of the six communities.



Worked with three cities, departments of transportation and counties to address safety issues. Results included crosswalks marked and signals installed; sidewalks and paths to schools repaired and debris and encroaching vegetation removed; 70 dilapidated homes removed and lots cleared, and more than 150 tons of debris hauled away in one *Embrace* community and neighboring areas; added new streetlights; and focused more attention from codes and law enforcement officials.

- In one community that has no bus services for students and where students faced many challenges walking to school, including dark spots, stray dogs, sexual predators, trash and more, worked with the community residents and successfully implemented the *Walking School Bus* program. It now boasts 14 volunteer leaders or *Walking School Bus* drivers and eight different routes. The walking drivers escort and provide pedestrian safety classes to approximately 60 students to and from school daily.
- In one community, worked with citizens and their city council to approve monies to build a new community center so the children and families would have safe places to play and have access to health services and indoor play areas.
- Two cities worked together to change a bus route to provide access to the flea market that contains a farmers market in the other city.
- Worked with the community and found the funding to build safe playgrounds. They are now built in two communities where there were no playgrounds.
- A total of 300 students in after-school programs were educated on the advertising practices of big companies and how to offset the negative messages through healthy eating and active living.
- Worked with a total of 10 students from one low-income area to develop and implement a social media campaign tied to a renovated corner market that led to increased availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and increased sales of these items for the corner market.
- Developed and implemented a patient education program for physicians. A total of 20 physicians in one community are distributing to their low income families prescriptions for healthy eating and active living using the *5-2-1-Almost None* messaging from Nemours.

## Leveraging of programs and funding:

As of December 2013, the *Embrace* Communities have started to leverage the Foundation funding to garner other funding and in-kind resources to support the Initiative work long past the Foundation's funding. The total dollars leveraged to date from local,



regional and national organizations and local governments is \$1.9M.

## Legacy Planning:

The Florida Blue Foundation is committed to making sure that when we fund long-term initiatives, like *Embrace*, we exit the initiative in a very thoughtful and caring manner. Therefore, the Foundation engaged with each of the six *Embrace* Lead Organizations and Community Coalitions around a new concept called "Community Legacy" planning. We asked them to identify what from the *Embrace* Initiative is important to keep in their communities long past our funding. They met over a year to determine their priorities and then developed the plan and the possible funding/resource development plan to not only keep it alive, but rather to have it led and managed by the Community Coalitions. The six communities are actively seeking financial and in-kind resources to meet their two- to five-year plans. For example, in one community, Opa-locka, the Coalition met with the City Mayor and Council and shared their plans for a Covered Farmers Market and Food Hub and the need for the City to donate some prime unused land to build the facility that will eventually house fresh food for the community, banks, antique markets, bakery, cannery and space for the farmers to process and package their crops for the local community and beyond. The land was donated by the City, an architect volunteered his time to create the design for the structure and a construction company has agreed to build the needed 10,000-square-foot building. They are on their way to making a difference in the lives of the citizens in that community and beyond. This is just one story of success that has happened as a result of the *Embrace* Initiative.

Below are a few stories from each of the *Embrace* Communities. We are proud to have partnered with these communities to make a difference in the lives of the children, families and the built environment. More in-depth information about the Initiative and the products will be available in mid-2015.

## Hialeah Public Libraries - Healthy Lifestyle at Your Library



Hialeah Public Libraries, one of the 23 mini-grantees funded through the Florida Blue Foundation *Embrace a Healthy Florida* and *Hialeah Healthy Families* initiatives, provides a cornucopia of educational and hands-on activities that foster healthy eating and active living habits for children



and families. A diverse and interactive program, *Healthy Lifestyle at Your Library* encourages positive lifestyle practices through gardening, art projects, fitness activities, and culinary classes. The activities included a "Ready-to-Grow Gardens" workshop, Short Chef's "Decorate Your Veggie Cupcake" activity, the "Eat Right" Summer Program by Common Threads, and "Let's Get Fit". These programs served a total of 155 adults and 289 children in the City of Hialeah. By serving these individuals, they have begun to embrace their role in the community and promote these programs to others. It has become a stepping stone in educating a generation of health-conscious individuals in Hialeah.

"The garden at my library is super cute, cool, and amazing," said 11-year-old Daleidys. And six-year-old Yetsie said, "This garden is a beautiful place to keep," at the opening of the Library Garden, also the location for the "Ready-to-Grow Gardens" workshop.

The "Ready-to-Grow Gardens" workshop provided the community with hands-on lessons on the basics of planting and maintaining an edible garden. Families learned how to increase their access to healthy and nutritious fruits and vegetables, and how increasing consumption of these contributes to a healthier lifestyle, including preventing obesity, as well as reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

The program aligns with the Florida Blue Foundation's focus on healthy lifestyles and promoting better health in communities. Hialeah Public Libraries and its partners designed successful programming all year to feature fun, educational and engaging activities which will motivate children and families to make smarter choices, encourage healthier practices, and take action against childhood obesity.

## Jacksonville

Access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables is minimal in parts of Duval County. Through a community member partnership with Florida Organic Growers and Beaches Green Market, we have been able to rectify this epidemic in one area of Jacksonville. Open year-round, from 2pm-5pm every Saturday, rain or shine, at Jarboe Park in Neptune Beach, the Beaches Green Market has been recognized by shoppers and vendors alike as the "model" producer-only market in Northeast Florida. With 31 booth spots, thousands of shoppers come each week to buy local produce, meats, artisan cheeses, fresh baked breads, local honey and much more!





In 2013 the Beaches Green Market was approved to become a SNAP/EBT retailer, which enables the market to provide access to the best local food on the First Coast to all community members. In addition, through their partnership with Florida Organic Growers, the Market now offers Fresh Access Bucks, a program that doubles the amount of Florida grown fruits and vegetables SNAP recipients can purchase at the market. This was a result of grant funding received from the Florida Blue Foundation as part of the *Healthy Jacksonville Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition* initiative. The Beaches Green Market is now able to have an EBT manager on-site at the market each week, who also organizes monthly healthy food education programs to benefit SNAP recipients through cooking demonstrations, nutrition material, recipe cards and more.

"With each year, the Green Market keeps growing, fostering healthy lifestyles and community spirit while supporting local farmers, ultimately leading to nutritious food on all our tables," said Devon Ritch, Director, Beaches Local Food Network.



## Tampa/Sulphur Springs



Master John Wilds and six-year-old Amyah demonstrate the basics of self-defense in the bi-weekly Tae-Kwon Do classes hosted at the Abundant Life (Novous Vitae) Church in Sulphur Springs, Tampa.

### Tae-Kwon Do: Fighting Obesity and Raising Self-Esteem in Sulphur Springs



Observe any one of the current 20 youth participants in the Novous Vitae Tae-Kwon Do classes in Sulphur Springs and you will hear the typical sentiments of, "This is fun!" or "I don't want to leave." Listen a bit closer and 13-year-old Jevon will also share, "This class helped me improve my discipline and allowed me to concentrate better." Six-year-old Amyah will chime in to tell you, "I feel more responsible for my actions and I feel like a better person." Jevon's dad proudly looks on and shares that, "Jevon is not as timid as he was at the beginning of the class and the class helped build his self-esteem."

With a fee-based martial arts center located on the outskirts of the Sulphur Springs community, parents and children had limited access to programs like Tae-Kwon Do due to financial circumstances and transportation issues. For the first time, children have access to free Tae-Kwon Do classes hosted by the Abundant Life (Novous Vitae) Church and administered through the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA and its *Creating A Healthier Sulphur Springs for Kids* (CHSSK) Initiative. A mini-grant from the Florida Blue Foundation makes this growing opportunity possible by providing resources for staffing, incentives and community partnerships.

The bi-weekly classes are led by Master John Wilds. Students also receive regular interactive nutrition classes as part of their Tae-Kwon Do instruction. Discussions about My Plate and the importance of eating healthy are incorporated into the lessons and children visit the junk food tree where they replace unhealthy foods with an assortment of healthy food from each food group. Improved self-esteem, discipline, and knowledge of healthy eating are all part of the focus of these classes to help address the causes and prevention of childhood obesity.

The CHSSK Initiative is a part of the Florida Blue Foundation's *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative. This initiative focuses on a community-driven, multi-sector approach to making long-term changes in health for not only youth but also for their families and communities. CHSSK focuses on the unique needs of the Sulphur Springs community by addressing six key areas: Child Care, Youth, and Families; Community Outreach; Healthy Living; Access to Care; Food and Nutrition; and Safety, Access, and Community Pride. Novous Vitae is a part of a group of 17 other mini-grant recipients, a vibrant Coalition, and many other key stakeholders who are helping to create a healthier Sulphur Springs for kids like Jevon and Amyah and their families.

## Tallahassee





### **Institutionalizing Walking And Talking About Eating (I-WATE) Bond Community Health Center**

"When the doctor told me that I had diabetes, I said to him, 'The devil is a lie...NOT ME!'. But, I was in the hospital with a blood sugar over 400," said Pamela Johnson. "All I want to do is lose some weight, get my blood sugar down, and get off some of this medicine." Through her participation in the I-WATE program, Pamela set a goal to lose weight, bring her blood glucose levels under control, and improve her mobility in order to qualify for employment. And, she did! She even received the "I-WATE Goal Maker" award for 2013-2014.

I-WATE (Institutionalizing Walking And Talking About Eating) is a family intervention that integrates chants about the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet with walking routines, and provides needed skills training and motivation for behavioral change related to healthy eating and active living. DASH, endorsed by key authoritative public health agencies, is a total diet plan focusing on liberal amounts of vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy products and whole grains; moderate amounts of low-fat meats; and limited sweets and fats. Bond Community Health Center and Florida State University Nutrition, Food, and Exercise Sciences partnered on the project and worked together to improve the health of those living in the area around the health center.

Monthly, adults and their children assemble at Bond Community Health Center for a wellness class that begins with in-door walking to instrumental music with voiceover chants promoting the DASH diet. Walks are followed by nutrition lessons featuring food demonstrations that promote DASH food groups, taste-tests, table-talk, portion control and related topics. Classes are held the first Saturday of each month and homework packets are mailed out during the month to reinforce face-to-face lessons. Supporting the program is an interactive website that provides WATE materials (cooking demonstrations, recipes, etc.) and documents WATE activities and accomplishments.

Bond Community Health Center received two Florida Blue Foundation mini-grants through the Tallahassee Childhood Obesity Prevention Education Coalition (Tally COPE), a part of the Foundation's *Embrace a Healthy Florida* initiative addressing the causes and



prevention of childhood obesity. The aim of the first mini-grant was to determine the feasibility and appeal of using a community health center to promote WATE to patients, their families and acquaintances residing in the target area, wherein rates of obesity and obesity-related diseases are elevated. Successful WATE pilot-test outcomes resulted in the second grant to build WATE into the Bond Community Health Center organizational and administrative systems.

Better blood pressure control, better blood sugar control, a better blood lipid profile, and improved weight management are all documented benefits of following the DASH Program of diet and walking regularly.

### **Tallahassee Food Network takes message national**

Delegates of Tallahassee Food Network represented their city and a growing movement of good food advocacy at the Jefferson Awards for Public Service banquet in Washington, D.C., June 13-16, 2014.

Tallahassee Food Network (TFN) co-founder Nathan Ballentine was awarded the Jefferson Award for Public Service at the *Tallahassee Democrat's* Volunteers of the Year awards luncheon in May. Ballentine was recognized for his volunteer efforts co-directing TFN and co-coordinating the TFN youth empowerment program, *iGrow Whatever You Like*.

TFN's *iGrow Whatever You Like* and other services of the food network are components of several mini-grantees engaged by the Tallahassee Childhood Obesity Prevention and Education Coalition with funding from the Florida Blue Foundation's *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative addressing the causes and prevention of childhood obesity. Gardening, nutrition education and access to fresh fruits and vegetables are components of the COPE Coalition's call to action plan addressing healthy eating and active living needs in and around Tallahassee.

As the Jefferson Award recipient, Ballentine was sent to D.C. to represent Tallahassee at the banquet. Ballentine brought along TFN delegates Mary Elizabeth Ballentine, iGrow Start-up Culinary Coordinator; Sundiata Ameh-El, iGrow Director; and Clarenia White, iGrow Market Staff.

"We work to grow community-based good food systems as a team," said Ballentine. "So we travel as a team."

Alongside the hundreds of volunteers who convened in D.C. to represent their communities and the admirable causes that drive their passion to serve countless hours of service, Ballentine and the TFN delegation represented their dreams and vision for



collaboration, empowerment and food security.

With the mission to work across lines of division to grow community-based good food systems that work for everyone, TFN and its more than 260 organizational partners have demonstrated success in uniting people despite differences in socio-economic factors, race, professional level, political affiliations or religious beliefs. TFN thinks in terms of movement building, capacity building and Asset Based Community Development – the idea that everyone has resources, skills, ideas and associations to bring to the table. TFN believes that sharing dreams and helping people achieve their dreams is the dynamism that grows movements. This vision has resonated among the Tallahassee community through Ballentine's recognition, and will continue to spread as the TFN delegates build more connections and partnerships at the Jefferson Awards banquet in D.C. and beyond.



*Tallahassee Food Network and iGrow representatives Mary Elizabeth Ballentine, Nathan Ballentine, Clarenia White, and Sundiata Ameh-El at the Jefferson Awards in Washington, D.C., where Mr. Ballentine received his Jefferson Award.*

## Wolfson Children's Hospital



*Kidz Bite Back at Riverside Presbyterian Day School in Jacksonville*

### **Kidz Biting Back**

Six hundred students from the Northeast Florida area are learning how to bite back



against unhealthy lifestyles. *Kidz Bite Back*, a program funded by Florida Blue Foundation, and administered by THE PLAYERS Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children's Hospital, teaches students to become smarter consumers by revealing marketing techniques that promote overconsumption of unhealthy foods and drinks and encourage overuse of TV watching and video games. The kid-created, kid-led, kid-spread campaign was designed to educate fourth and fifth grade students on Big Fat Industries (fast food, soft drink, junk food industries), Couch Potato Companies (national TV networks, video game companies) and the basics of living healthy. Fourth and fifth grade student leaders train their fellow students using a PowerPoint presentation and web-based activities, becoming "Kidz", empowered to be smarter consumers and make healthier choices. The purpose is to impact family culture by improving nutrition, physical activity and educated consumerism – all of which contribute to preventing obesity.

Working with YMCA of Florida's First Coast summer camps and after-school programs, Riverside Presbyterian Day School, and Communities in Schools and Duval County Schools after-school programs, THE PLAYERS Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children's Hospital provided training materials to Kidz Advocates who shared their new knowledge with their peers.

YMCA Atlantic Kids Campus in Nassau County held their summit in February. A week following the summit, Jen Stallings, Regional Youth Development Director, shared her thoughts. "Our *Kidz Bite Back*! YMCA advocates presented a *Kidz Bite Back* summit last week on-site to spread awareness to our program participants, families and community representatives. They planned the event on their own and provided handwritten invitations, shared an educational PowerPoint, presented a group music video demonstrating health habits in a fun and creative way, hosted interactive games and provided yummy healthy snacks. We are very proud of their commitment to good health."



*Kidz Bite Back at Rufus Payne Elementary School in Jacksonville*

Foundation Board Members "Embrace" One Community



The Florida Blue Foundation Board held its June 18, 2014, Board meeting and had a great healthy lunch in an *Embrace* community, Orlando/Parramore, at Hebni Nutrition Consultants, a grantee that teaches families how to buy and prepare healthy foods. The Board also conducted site visits at two of the *Embrace* projects, the community garden and the refurbished and redesigned community corner store in a food desert location of Parramore. The store now carries fresh vegetables, fruits and other healthy products. The community now shops there for their family groceries, since a supermarket is about nine miles away. The pictures below are of Board members and grantees in the *Embrace* community.



Gary Healy, Renée Finley, Penny Shaffer



Darrell Smith, Maria Moutinho, Jason Altmire



Susan Towler, Charlie Joseph, Mark McGowan, Kerri Masley, Jason Altmire, and Cat DeCecco



Foundation Board and Staff pose outside the offices of Hebni Nutrition Consultants and the bus that is being converted into a mobile farmers market and nutrition education center. Fresh Stop, the name of the mobile farmers market, is expected to begin service in the Fall of 2014.





*Foundation Board and Staff visit Parramore Community Garden, one of the Embrace a Healthy Florida mini-grantees working in Parramore to increase access to healthy foods in a food desert.*



*Parramore Community Garden is centrally located in Parramore, an area in Orlando that includes housing, commercial businesses, community centers, religious institutions, corner markets, small businesses, but no full-service grocery stores.*



*Glen Providence (center), Hebni Nutrition Consultants, explains to Susan Towler and Charlie Joseph that this section of SunLife Grocery now displays fresh fruits and vegetables instead of beer, sodas and chips as the result of a Promising Practices grant from the Embrace a Healthy Florida initiative.*





## Special Notice

The 2015 SAPPHIRE AWARDS Nomination Applications are now available and ready for your use. The closing date is September 19, 2014. Please nominate some of the deserving individuals, programs and organizations in your communities across Florida. [Click here](#) for information on eligibility and guidelines and to make your nomination.

### CORRECTION

*The previous issue of the e-newsletter incorrectly stated the amount awarded to Paul Ahr, Winner, Individual Category, 2014 Sapphire Award. The correct amount is \$50,000. We apologize for the error.*

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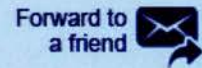
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MISSION: Help people and communities achieve better health.

E-newsletter 18 - Part II | September-October  
2014



## ***Embrace a Healthy Florida Initiative - Engaging the Communities through the use of Community Coalitions and Partners***

In last month's newsletter, we discussed the background of the *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative, and some of the findings. In this newsletter we are sharing another success model that is working under this initiative, the Childhood Obesity Community Coalitions and Partners.

Research shows that authentic community engagement is vital to the success of community-based programs. It is the community that needs to own the issue and work together to find the right solutions that can work for them long past any outside funding.

The coalitions and partnerships were not formed by Florida Blue Foundation, but rather through the work of the *Embrace* Lead Organizations that are well respected in the six communities where the *Embrace a Healthy Florida* efforts are located.

Below are some examples of how these Coalitions have made a difference in four of the *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative Communities.

Susan Towler,  
*Vice President, Florida Blue Foundation*



## The City of Hialeah

The City of Hialeah is a full-service city serving over 240,000 residents, making it the sixth largest city in the state of Florida. Over 95 percent of the city's residents are Hispanic, making Hialeah a diverse yet unified place to live. Similar to most communities around our country, the rates of obesity in Hialeah are rising, with recent statistics showing 46 percent of school-age children in Hialeah are overweight, with 27 percent of those being obese. With the support of the city's mayor, community stakeholders have determined these rates are unacceptable and have pledged to take action against childhood obesity in the City of Hialeah, the *City of Progress*.

In the Fall of 2010, the City of Hialeah pledged to build upon a coalition of community partners to change organization practices, mobilize neighborhoods and communities, and influence policy to address the causes of childhood obesity in seven areas: *Early Care and Education; Community Planning; Public Health; Medical Community; Parks & Recreation; Public Safety; and Transportation*.

Through funding from the Florida Blue Foundation, this effort resulted in coordination among public, corporate, and media partners in Hialeah working together to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat childhood obesity by raising awareness of programs that support a healthy lifestyle and increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity. The *Hialeah Healthy Families* initiative began with the formation of an advisory board and four working groups in January 2011, with the meeting of these groups beginning March 2011. The four working groups included Early Childhood and Education; Health, Nutrition and Fitness; Data & Evaluation; and Community Outreach. The advisory board led and oversaw the identification of current programming aimed at children's health promotion and identified areas of continued need within the community.

Members of the working groups examined strategies to foster lifestyle changes with proper nutrition and fitness, nutrition education and fitness programming for children, opportunities for increasing awareness of healthy food and exercise options, and data and evaluation tools. Since then, community surveys and focus groups have been conducted, as well as meetings of key stakeholders and community agencies to inform the development of a comprehensive plan (*Hialeah Healthy Families - Call to Action Against Childhood Obesity*), a framework for action and programming that, through programmatic aspects, engages the community in adopting a healthy and physically active lifestyle.





Through the information gathered over the past several months by an enthusiastic and dedicated team of professionals, the community has focused on specific targets to guide efforts to initiate change in the City of Hialeah. These areas are: Environment; School Involvement; Family Engagement; Social; Marketing; and Community Outreach. These targets were chosen based on data collected regarding ongoing efforts to prevent and treat obesity in the community, identification of the city's strengths and areas of improvement, and recognition of the city's culture and existing framework. Using a combination of the current assets of the City of Hialeah and the areas of need identified, these targets serve as a guide for the development of specific programs geared towards the overall goal of addressing the current rates of obesity in children of Hialeah, and preventing obesity by promoting healthy lifestyles in children as well as their parents.

## The Health Council of East Central Florida - Building a Healthy Parramore Community

The Health Council of East Central Florida formed *ROCK (Reduce Obesity in Central Florida Kids)* in 2009 through funding from the Florida Blue Foundation and in-kind support from Nemours Children's Hospital. The consortium's goal is to address childhood obesity in Central Florida, particularly selecting the historic African-American community of Parramore in Orlando, based on an earlier community needs assessment indicating higher rates of childhood obesity (37.5 percent) as compared to Orange County (15.1 percent).

Out of *ROCK*, an advisory committee of local community and health organizations was formed to begin addressing childhood obesity. To gain understanding of how the residents of Parramore could become healthier, the Health Council conducted stakeholder interviews, focus group research and community forums. The information gained from these settings was critical to the success of the coalition and its goals. The



advisory committee recommended inclusion of a variety of interested partners across the health sector to prepare a Call to Action plan. The coalition is comprised of community members, faith-based organizations, hospitals and other health care centers, the Florida Department of Health in Orange County, local businesses, the City of Orlando, local elected officials, Orange County Public Schools, sports franchises, local private schools, and local food banks.

The Call to Action is the result of a broad community engagement process that brought together data, community perception and knowledge and defined actions. It identified strategies to build and support efforts addressing the barriers preventing the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviors. Upon completion of the Call to Action plan, it was shared and accepted by community members. Currently, monthly meetings with a standing community-driven agenda are held and facilitated by the Health Council/ROCK, and are hosted by one of the Parramore community partners. There are three reporting committees: Youth Development, which includes the youth voice and involvement in the coalition; Policy and Advocacy, which identifies local and statewide efforts to pursue and support obesity-related policies; and Special Events, which is the outreach effort into the community.

The Health Council has also managed the disbursement of additional funding from the Florida Blue Foundation designed to support strategies identified in the Call to Action plan. As a result, some partners became mini-grantees, while others have continued to support coalition efforts by providing resources, outreach to their networks and encouraging other organizations and community members with an interest in reducing childhood overweight and obesity to join. Members have the opportunity to use the coalition as a vehicle to collaborate and/or expand new or existing programs, community events, conferences, educational workshops, seminars and other activities promoting healthy lifestyles.

Some successes of the coalition efforts include:

- Creation and adoption of wellness policies by seven child care centers located in Parramore.
- Technical assistance to child care centers for statewide designations as breastfeeding-friendly sites.
- Nutrition education via one-on-one counseling sessions for Parramore youth at a local middle school.
- Programs offering culturally specific nutrition and physical education to the African-American and Haitian population (youth and adults).
- Youth employment in positions promoting athletic activities.
- Access to fresh fruits and vegetables through gardening and transformation of a community store.
- Research into the Haitian community's knowledge of childhood obesity and preferred methods of receiving health messages.



The Parramore community has benefited from the creation of the coalition in the following ways:

- It is a central location for all entities interested in childhood overweight and obesity research, education, programs and local activities.
- An increase in nutrition, physical activity programs and healthy lifestyle education options are available to community members.
- Strategic health and wellness policy changes were implemented on the local level.

The Coalition successes have been recognized by the city commissioner of the Parramore District, and it has been selected the health advisory group for the area. This charge will ensure continued engagement of all partners and sustainability of health and wellness community-focused efforts going forward.



## Sulphur Springs/Tampa

The *Creating a Healthier Sulphur Springs for Kids (CHSSK)* Coalition is a network of people working together to improve the health of children in the community. This group, which includes residents, service providers, government officials, and university partners, began in 2010 when the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA received an *Embrace a Healthy Florida* grant from the Florida Blue Foundation. Since the neighborhood is above the state and national averages for overweight and obese children, the Coalition's goal is to promote healthy living in Sulphur Springs and reduce the number of overweight and obese children in the community.



Early in the initiative, Tampa Y staff attended community group meetings and met with local nonprofits working in the neighborhood to raise awareness about efforts related to childhood obesity and to develop the Coalition. The existing synergy and passion of partners in Sulphur Springs along with key community leaders allowed for the formation of the *CHSSK* Coalition. In January 2011, the *CHSSK* Coalition members partnered with the Sulphur Springs Action League Neighborhood Association to conduct a door-to-door community survey and community forum, which provided the framework for the *CHSSK* Coalition. Over 240 resident responses were used to create six advisory working groups that are responsible for addressing issues most important to the community. These include: **Food and Nutrition** - Goal: Increase healthy food options within the community; **Community Outreach** - Goal: Increase opportunities for resident engagement; **Safety, Access, and Community Pride** - Goal: Improve neighborhood health and safety; **Healthy Living** - Goal: Promote community health education; **Child Care, Youth, and Families** - Goal: Increase healthy eating and active living for children and families; and **Access to Care** - Goal: Ensure a medical home for children and families.



By talking to people who live and work in Sulphur Springs, these work groups have identified what is needed to improve the health of the community. In addition, the surveying process and support of the *CHSSK* Coalition helped create the guiding document of this initiative, "A Community Call to Action to Address Childhood Obesity in Sulphur Springs" or Community Call to Action.

The *CHSSK* Coalition is led by Tampa Y - *Embrace* staff who also coordinate bi-monthly Coalition meetings. The Coalition serves as a guiding body to assure that the needs of the community are being met. Information exchange and updates are a priority at meetings. The Sulphur Springs community has benefited from having the *CHSSK* Coalition because it is an additional supportive voice for the community. By linking partners and residents to services and information, the community becomes healthier.

The *CHSSK* Initiative also has 17 mini-grant recipients funded by the Florida Blue Foundation to conduct 22 different projects in the community focusing on the six key



areas mentioned above. Projects include *Walking School Bus*, community and satellite gardens, sports clinics, mobile medical clinics, tae-kwon-do classes, family health education programs, and more! The CHSSK Coalition receives updates against the progress of these mini-grantees as well.

Over the years, the Coalition, working with the residents and different community groups, has provided a collective manpower towards improving the Sulphur Springs community. They supported the long-time efforts of the Neighborhood Association to have a crosswalk installed on a high-traffic road that has claimed the lives of many. They worked with the KaBoom playground project, Kiwanis Club, Layla's House, City of Tampa, and several other partners to bring a developmentally appropriate playground and edible garden to the grounds of Layla's House, an early childhood and parent learning center. They provided infrastructure support and leadership for the Community Garden at Layla's House. They advocated for safer streets by showcasing the *Walking School Bus* Program with multiple media outlets to raise the awareness and importance of pedestrian safety in Sulphur Springs. The Coalition continues to work diligently to launch the community's first farmers market.

As the Coalition sharpens its focus on sustainability, the next steps for the CHSSK Coalition include serving as the "Health and Safety" workgroup for the *Neighborhood of Promise* Initiative in Sulphur Springs. It will continue to attract and connect partners to residents to improve the health, wellness, and safety of the community. In addition, through a visioning process, the community has asked for a focus on increasing access to green spaces, improving food access through community gardens, and providing additional health and nutrition education. The Coalition is working to add additional community and satellite gardens, and provide healthy cooking classes. Advocacy efforts and strength in collaborations will continue to ensure that the community is creating a healthier Sulphur Springs for our kids!

## Florida Department of Health - Duval County

### ***Healthy Jacksonville Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition*** **Community Engagement**

Starting in 2003, *Healthy Jacksonville Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (HJCOPC)* acknowledged that childhood obesity was neither a moral failing nor simply a medical problem. The *Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition* was formed under the support of *Healthy People 2010*. This group recognized the importance of involving the entire community in order to improve the health of children, thus leading to the mission to



prevent and reduce obesity in children and adolescents by promoting healthy and active lifestyles for children in Duval County. The values of the *HJCOPC* include:

- Community Involvement and Empowerment
- Partnership and Collaboration
- Inclusion and Equity
- Respect for Diversity
- Shared Decision-making
- Information Sharing and Communication

With Duval County's obesity numbers rising, the *HJCOPC* wanted to take action and in 2006 saw the need to use the Social-Ecological Framework to address childhood obesity prevention in different work groups. The work groups were:

1. Data, Surveillance and Evaluation
2. Early Childhood
3. Health Care Professionals
4. Marketing, Advertising and Media
5. Parent, Family and Community
6. Policy and Advocacy



In 2006, the coalition published *The Duval County Evidence-Based Policy Report*. This policy report was the outcome of the interaction between scientists, clinicians, community leaders and residents and has served as a framework for developing the community response to the obesity epidemic.

In 2008, Florida Blue Foundation recognized the coalition's efforts to reduce and prevent childhood obesity and provided funding to increase local capacity, including the



development of a community action plan. Since then there has been steady and tremendous growth not just in numbers, but also in its reach in the community and development of other partnerships such as the Duval County Food Policy Council, which ensures access to fresh healthy food for the residents of Jacksonville.

Childhood obesity is a health issue with multiple causes and therefore the solutions need to be addressed from all sectors of the community. The coalition is made up of citizens, health care professionals, parents, teachers and other individuals committed to reducing and ultimately preventing childhood obesity in Duval County. *Healthy Jacksonville*, a department within the Florida Department of Health in Duval County, provides administrative support to the coalition.

Through the work and efforts of the coalition many of the community partners have received grant funding to further their efforts and partnered with others who share the same strategic goals to "grow" healthy children. There have also been many successes as a result, including Florida Academy of Family Physicians' (FAFP) development of an obesity tool kit; Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation & Empowerment (ICARE) work towards making hospitals baby friendly; and the Fresh Access Buck.

In order to continuously engage and sustain the efforts to combat and prevent childhood obesity in Jacksonville, the *HJCOPC* utilizes numerous evidence-based strategies to continue galvanizing the community. The coalition meets monthly at numerous locations such as Nemours Clinic and the Florida Department of Health in Duval County, and also conducts "field" meetings held at strategic sites utilizing best practices in the field. The coalition also distributes a bi-monthly electronic newsletter called *BITE-SIZED NEWS* that includes information about upcoming meetings, community events and highlights of work in the field. The coalition also utilizes social media including Facebook and Twitter to share information on its work. In addition, the *HJCOPC* provides a bi-yearly report on progress and highlights called *Stories in Field*, which helps to track the call to action. Every September, the coalition hosts *Celebrating Healthy Kids and Active Communities in Duval County* where youth, organizations and individuals are honored as health heroes for exemplary work in creating a healthier community for children. All these strategies keep the community engaged and motivated.



## Special Notice

Mark your calendars for the upcoming 2015 Sapphire Awards and Symposium - April 22-23, 2015, Bonaventure Resort and Spa, Weston, Florida. Stay tuned for more information.



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Jacksonville, FL 32246

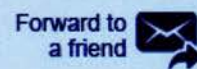
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MISSION: Help people and communities achieve better health.

E-newsletter 19 - Part III | November-December  
2014



This is the last of a three-part series on the Florida Blue Foundation's *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative. We wanted to share how we are working to effectively exit the Initiative, yet keep a legacy in the communities we have invested in over the last seven years.

It's often challenging for funders to actively spend time working closely with their funded grantees around the issue of sustained/legacy funding. Most grantees/ communities believe that once the funding dries up, "the money will be gone and the communities will go back to doing business as usual." The Florida Blue Foundation was committed to developing a process and implementation strategies to sustain the Embrace Lead Organizations' (ELOs) work and services in the six Embrace communities. For example, we provided assistance and training to the ELOs to build their skills as funders. We gave them the authority to solicit, have discussions and make decisions about selecting and awarding mini-grants in their communities. Today they have the skills that are needed to be proposal reviewers for state, local, or national funders.

Lastly, we worked with the ELOs and their community coalitions to think strategically about what they would like to have left behind in these six Embrace communities. We called this the "legacy." The legacy is described for this initiative as something left behind, passed on or kept going because there is documented evidence that it was making a difference. The ELOs and their community coalition members have and are



continuing to work hard to make sure the accomplishments, which are many, continue. To date, the legacies in most of the six communities will live well past five years or more after the Foundation's funding ends in 2015. The Foundation will provide a small matching grant for legacy seed funding, but the majority of the \$1.2 million funding to date has been secured by the ELOs and their coalitions from commitments from governments, the private and public sectors, individuals and other in-kind confirmed partnerships. These secured legacy dollars are a true testament of the respect and impact the *Embrace a Healthy Florida* Initiative has and will continue to have on the people and communities they serve.

Below are summaries of the legacy projects/initiatives that will continue in the six Embrace communities after the Florida Blue Foundation major funding support comes to a close in 2015.

Susan Towler  
Vice President  
Florida Blue Foundation



## Embrace Community - The City of Hialeah Legacy Plan

The City of Hialeah legacy project will focus on educating the Hialeah community on the importance of eating healthy and staying active, as well as increasing an awareness of the *Hialeah Healthy Families* (HHF) initiative. The project will also focus on increasing accessibility to healthy foods.

The community will begin a bilingual monthly cooking show to be aired on Comcast's TV 77 and streamed on the City's website. It will also address the accessibility and promotion of smart phone apps so the residents of Hialeah can locate healthy options,



whether it is eateries/restaurants, healthy food markets, farmers markets, juice bars, or organic coffee shops and the like. By July 2015, they anticipate having established partnerships with supermarkets, media, local business, sport franchises, and nutrition experts resulting in the implementation of cooking classes, nutrition workshops and HHF logos in supermarkets identifying healthy options. With the assistance of college interns, they will continue to work on the newly established HHF e-newsletter through 2019. The City of Hialeah is committed to the continuation of HHF and pledges to continue promoting the initiative through marketing and publicity efforts from the City's Communications and Special Events Office through web, Comcast TV 77 and social media outlets.

The University of Miami (UM) is currently providing an intern to assist with the legacy work. HHF expects to receive intern support from local universities/colleges for the next five years. They have received interns from UM and Barry University since 2012 resulting in total in-kind value of \$15,480 before July 1, 2015. Future intern support is projected at \$51,840 over the next five years with a grand total of \$67,320 in-kind intern support by 2019. Marketing/publicity efforts from the City of Hialeah are estimated at \$25,000 in-kind over the next five years.



*Hialeah youth conduct a walkability study as part of their efforts to improve opportunities for safe physical activities.*

## Embrace Community - Jacksonville/Duval County Legacy Plan

The legacy was determined by the coalition based on Call to Actions that would have the largest impact: 1) Health Care Systems and Providers; 2) Community, Faith, Youth Organizations; and 3) Media and Marketing Community.



The focus of Healthy Jacksonville will include, but not be limited to:

- Health Care Systems and Providers
  - Develop a unified health care systems approach for prevention and address and train all providers
  - Encourage dialogue with physicians and other health care providers on preventative measures
  - Collaborate with churches and schools to advance the unified preventative system approach
- Community, Faith, Youth Organizations
  - Advance the work of the Youth Advisory Council
- Media and Marketing Community
  - Develop and launch a full media campaign (social, digital, television and radio)

More than 60 partners are confirmed. Subway has committed to engage all the schools beginning with the National Walk to School Day on October 8, 2014, with incentives along the way from local franchises totaling \$5,000. The Clinton Foundation has confirmed to provide an undetermined amount of in-kind donations and relationship capital to advance the coalition's work.

## Embrace Community - Opa-locka Legacy Plan

The Opa-locka coalition has identified a Farmers Market and Food Hub as their legacy project to improve health outcomes in the area and enhance the local economy. The City of Opa-locka has donated land appraised at \$337,000 for the construction of the business opportunity. Other partners are providing technical assistance for business plan development, strategic planning, fund development, and food distribution systems.

The Opa-locka Farmers Market will include a food hub that will buy directly from the participating farmers and will sell directly to consumers and anchor institutions. The food hub component will be USDA certified for Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) at the global level. This will allow farmers market access to new markets with major retailers and to the international/global produce markets. This market access is paramount to the financial sustainability of the farmers market.





Consumers will have year-round access to locally grown farm-fresh produce. The Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program will be used to allow low-income residents to buy fresh nutritious food and other merchandise. The markets will also offer other locally produced arts and craft items. Canned produce will enhance year-round availability of nutritious foods. This keeps local dollars in the area and supports local farmers selling to their neighbors. Nutrition education, wholesome eating habits, and better food preparation, as well as boosting local economics, are additional by-products of the Opa-locka Farmers Market.

A number of other services will be provided at the farmers market, including restaurants, cafés, smoothie stations; a cannery for preserving fresh food for future consumption; a nursery to provide plants, seeds, flowers and planting materials; a community credit union or bank branch office with financial literacy offerings; a health clinic; arts and crafts shops; and a community garden, to name a few.

## Embrace Community - Orlando/Parramore Legacy Plan

The legacy plan for Orlando/Parramore is to increase access to fresh nutritious foods and nutrition education programming for the children and families in two communities, including Parramore. The vision consists of 1) a network of gardens with the Parramore Community Garden as the model and provider of technical assistance; 2) a food hub that engages the Hebni Nutrition Consultant's mobile food bus to service communities identified as food deserts and provide nutrition education and healthy foods; and 3) the *ROCK (Reduce Obesity in Central Florida Kids)* website to provide virtual communications on obesity prevention options for stakeholders, including establishing garden guidance, nutrition education, sharing of resources, available programs and activities, research and best practices.



Partners and stakeholders include *Building a Healthy Parramore* Coalition partners, ROCK Board of Directors, local government agencies, universities and colleges, public and private schools, after-school programs, faith-based and community organizations, youth-serving organizations, families and children, and businesses in Parramore and Central Florida.



*Roniece Weaver, Building a Healthy Parramore Coalition member and co-founder of Hebni Nutrition Consultants, illustrates how to make a smoothie on the biker blender of the Fresh Stop Bus, a mobile farmers market and nutrition education center.*

## Embrace Community - Tampa/Sulphur Springs Legacy Plan

Building upon the success of the community garden and based on the Creating a Healthier Sulphur Springs for Kids Coalition feedback, the legacy project in Tampa/Sulphur Springs will be to increase gardening in the community and promote access to green spaces, fresh food, and health and nutrition education. The existing community garden thrives on a piece of property donated to the Tampa YMCA by the City of Tampa. Residents, young and old, have embraced the garden and are actively involved in planting and maintaining the property. This garden also serves as an experimental tool for the YMCA and community partners to conduct educational seminars pertaining to healthy living and eating. Partners have also hosted cooking demonstrations. Over the next three years, the YMCA and the Sulphur Springs Coalition will expand community gardening into all quadrants of Sulphur Springs and its faith-based and educational institutions, as well as creating a network of individual home-based gardens. Successfully networked community garden models have shown multiple benefits. As communities become healthier by consuming more nutrient-rich foods and becoming more active and more focused on their well-being, preventable diseases related to obesity such as heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and others decline.



To promote gardening, the YMCA and its partners will offer cooking classes hosted by elders in the community for young families, conduct seasonal plantings in the new and existing gardens, and present gardening education for youth at Sulphur Springs Elementary School, among others.

In addition to the community gardens, approximately 600 children at Sulphur Springs Elementary School will receive small take-home gardening kits. These kits include not only soil and seeds, but also educational materials to help families plant and maintain a child-friendly garden.

## Embrace Community - Tallahassee Legacy Plan

The *Tallahassee Childhood Obesity Prevention and Education (COPE)* Coalition and its partners have determined that sustained coalition operations focused on food access and nutrition education along with continued youth health leadership opportunities is the legacy they want to sustain from the Embrace initiative. There are plans for a formal food hub, expanded training and activities for Youth Health Leadership, and the addition of AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers engaged in food access, nutrition education, youth, and public health work for the Coalition. The Coalition partners have collaborated throughout the city and county and have a significant existing presence in Frenchtown, the targeted community within Tallahassee. The Coalition has been approached by the City of Tallahassee to expand and replicate Embrace's best practices on the Southside, a neighborhood of growing concern due to increased chronic disease states, lack of prenatal care, and the need for increased, environmental sustainability. The Coalition also plans to continue its public policy and advocacy work.

Partners recruited include the members of the COPE Coalition; city, county and state governments and elected officials; universities and colleges; child-serving organizations; public and private schools; neighborhood associations; among others.

Two grants have been received to leverage the work that has been accomplished through the Coalition's efforts. A USDA grant for \$196,000 over two years was received to address food desert issues in Tallahassee. The City of Tallahassee Community Redevelopment Agency also awarded a \$500,000, two-year grant directed to the Frenchtown Marketplace Facility.





*Food access and youth leadership are focus areas for Tallahassee legacy plans.*



## Upcoming Events

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MEET US THERE: April 22-23, 2015**  
**10-Year Celebration – Sapphire Awards and Symposium**

**When: April 22-23, 2015**

**Where: Bonaventure Resort and Spa, Weston, Florida**

**Registration: Begins early January 2015 at [FloridaBlueFoundation.com](http://FloridaBlueFoundation.com)**

### Ways to Celebrate and Learn

- Professional Development Opportunities
- Great National and Local Speakers
- 2015 Sapphire Award Winners
- Great 10-Year Celebration Event  
(music and food that celebrates the many different cultures in South Florida)





## Special Notices

Please note that this is our last e-newsletter for 2014. We have enjoyed working with all of you over the past year to help the people and communities across Florida achieve better health.



On behalf of the Florida Blue Foundation Board of Directors and the Staff of the Foundation we wish all of you, your families and the communities across Florida a Very Merry Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy NEW YEAR.





*Florida Blue Foundation & Corporate Social Responsibility staff (pictured from left to right):*

*Jay Farley, Executive Assistant; Debbie Printz, Administrative Assistant; Karla Ebio, Sponsorship and Events Specialist; Kristen Mareello, Director – Finance and Operations; Monica Boyajian, Foundation Analyst; Sharon Hackney, Senior Program Manager; Susan Towler, Vice President; Velma Monteiro-Tribble, Director - Grants and Programs; Sarah Hande, Employee Program Manager; Susan Wildes, Senior Program Manager; Kerri Masley, Senior Program Manager; Lisa Mathews, Senior Accountant; Carl Patten, Director - Evaluation and Research*



*Pictured from left to right:*

*Martha de la Pena Rojas, Senior Manager Market Development - South Florida; Cathryn DeCecco, Market Affairs Specialist - Central Florida; Michelle Hamilton, Market Affairs Specialist - West Florida*

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